

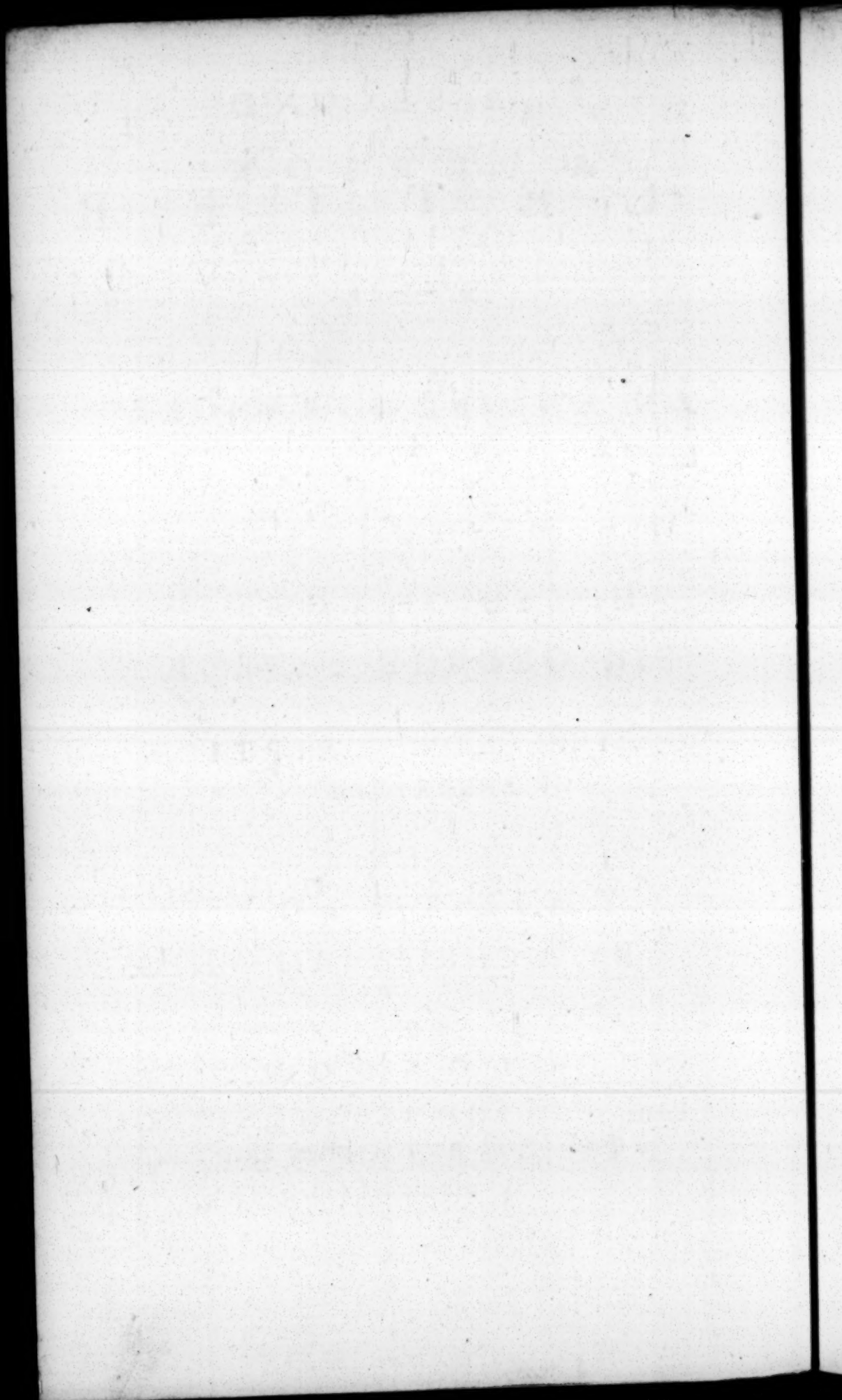
A SECOND
L E T T E R
TO THE
M E M B E R S
OF
THE HONOURABLE
HOUSE OF COMMONS;
RELATING TO
THE SUBSCRIPTION
REQUIRED OF
GRADUATES IN THE UNIVERSITIES.
BY A CHRISTIAN WHIG.

L O N D O N,

Printed for W. BOWYER and J. NICHOLS,
at Cicero's Head, Red-lion-passage, Fleet-street.

MDCCLXXII.

2



2.

A P E R S O N
WHO IS
AN ENTIRE STRANGER

TO
SIR GEORGE SAVILE

INSCRIBES
THIS TRACT
TO
HIS CHARACTER.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

LIBRARY

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000



A SECOND LETTER, &c.

AMONG the multiplicity of Tracts which have been published for and against The Clerical Petition, I had no Expectation, that *The Christian Whig* would have been distinguished by a *Second Edition*. It too freely and manifestly militates against the Prejudices of both Parties, to be well received by either. However, as a Respect for Truth, and a total Indifference as to the pleasing or displeasing of Parties, induced the Author to throw it into the World; the same Principles make him embrace with Pleasure this Opportunity of appealing once more to the Good Sense of the Members of The House of Commons, upon a Subject not indeed connected with, yet greatly analogous to, The Petition of the Clergy; and

B

which,

which, it is said, will speedily be submitted to their Decision. I speak of the Question which has been lately agitated in the University of Cambridge, relative to the Abolition of a Subscription, which all Persons are required to make, before they can be admitted to any Degree in that University. Without doubt, her Sister Oxford is shackled by the same Fetters, and pants for the same Freedom: But as I take my Ideas from what has been lately published upon the Subject, I will confine my Observations to Cambridge.—James I, in the Year 1613, sent Letters to that University, requiring them not to confer the Degree of Bachelor of Divinity, or of Doctor in any Faculty, upon any person whatsoever, before He had subscribed to the Three Articles contained in the 36th Canon. The then Senate of the University passed a Grace, beginning with this Preamble, “*Placeat vobis, ut* “*juxta tenorem literarum a Serenissimo Rege* “*missarum, hoc in Senatu decernatur &c.*” and enjoining a Subscription to the Three Articles contained in the 36th Canon, as
an

an indispensable Mean towards obtaining either of the forementioned Degrees. About three Years after, when the King was at Newmarket, He condescended in Person, and afterwards by Letter, to signify his Pleasure to the Vice-chancellor and Heads of Houses, that He would have all who take any Degree in Schools, subscribe to the Three Articles.—These, I believe, are the Foundations upon which the Right of requiring Subscription is built.—The Character of James you are no Stranger to. You cannot be surprized at this Instance of his Pedantry, this injudicious Exertion of his Prerogative; nor can you candidly censure the then Senate of the University for their supine Submission to his Authority: The Houses of Parliament would not have been less complaisant. The Limits of the Prerogative were not then so circumstantially defined, nor the Rights of Individuals and Corporations so explicitly declared, as at present.—It has lately, I understand, become a Question, Whether the University has a Power inherent in its Constitution,

of abolishing the Subscription imposed by James? I cannot divine what the Law may determine in this point; but Common Sense seems to inform me, that the present Senate of the University of Cambridge has as incontrovertible a Right of repealing a Grace, passed by the Senate of the University in the Time of James the First, as the present Legislature of the Kingdom has of annulling an Act of Parliament, enacted by any former Legislature. If a Grace acquires Strength, becomes stubborn by Time, and will not bend to the Power which made it; Why does an Act of Parliament continue so flexible? The University, it is agreed, can never have a Right to infringe or rescind any one of their Original Statutes; because their Statutes derive their Spirit and Strength from an Authority prior to the Existence and independent of the Will of the University. But under this Limitation, the Corporate Body seems to have an absolute Power of acting *pro re nata*, of altering, amending, abrogating any or all of the Ordinances superinduced on their original
ESta-

Establishment by preceding Corporate Acts. Without this Power, every temporary Institution would become perpetual, would operate with destructive Vigour, when the Reasons for its first Introduction no longer existed. If any one should be disposed to object, that the Obligation to Subscription arises from the Authority of The King's Letters, and not from the Grace of the Senate; He would run full upon the Horns of a Dilemma. Either the King's Letters (supposing them to exist,) derive their Authority from the Grace of the Senate, Or they have an Authority independent of that Grace. If they have an Authority independent of the Grace; What is the Import of a "*Placeat vobis, ut hoc decernatur?*" If the Grace gives Energy to the Letters; then may the whole of that Energy be revoked by the same Authority which gave it. But I beg your pardon, for descending to the Sophisms of Dialectics: the nice Distinctions and refined Subtleties of Argument, should ever be reserved for the Courts of Westminster, and the Schools of the University. The House of Commons
will

will take up the Subject, upon a different Ground. It will be no Concern of the Legislature, Whether the Universities have, or have not, the Power to make the Alteration; but, Whether the Alteration itself be wanted.

I have no Intention to affront you, Sir, in supposing you unacquainted with the Articles in Question. Your Ignorance of Ecclesiastical Canons is excusable. Suffer me to take the Liberty of hinting to you the Substance of those Three Articles, to which all persons, designing to become Graduates, are required willingly and *ex animo* to subscribe.

THE First relates to The King's Supremacy.—No one but a Papist will refuse his Assent to that.

THE Second affirms, that the Book of Common Prayer, and of ordering of Bishops, Priests and Deacons, contains in it nothing contrary to the Word of God.—So far Lay-
sub-

subscribers are affected; for Laymen (thanks to the Reformation!) are permitted to read their Bibles.—And farther it requires the Subscriber himself to use the Form in the said Book prescribed, in Public Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments.—This touches the Clergy in particular; and but slightly: for he lacks the Modesty becoming an Individual, who, after assenting to the former part of this Article, quarrels with the latter, because it may chance that a few Ceremonies, in their own Nature indifferent, and of no Moral Tendency, are not adapted to his particular Fancy.

THE Third Article requires the Candidates for Degrees, to acknowledge all and every of the Thirty-nine Articles agreed upon by the Archbishops, &c. in the year 1562, to be agreeable to the Word of God.

If you are a Graduate, Sir, you have subscribed these Articles: Yet may not this Information concerning the Substance of them

them be impertinent, even to you. It may be, that you looked upon Subscription, as one of the Ceremonies necessary for your Admission to your Degree; it may be, that you subscribed to you knew not what, with filial Reverence fairly presuming that your *Alma Mater* could have no propensity to take advantage of your Youth, by making an improper Requisition. I can hope as piously as any body, that No one ever gave his Assent to what He had never read, perhaps never heard of; but I appeal at once to the Heart of every Graduate in the House of Commons, for the truth of my Conjecture, and rest the matter upon that Issue. Without doubt, you are beginning to accuse the Tutors and Professors, of a very culpable Negligence, in not explaining to the Undergraduates, the Liturgy and Articles of the Church of England, before they take their First Degree in Arts.—But stop a Moment. Be not overhasty in censuring Men of Integrity and Ability, who preside over the Education of the British Youth. Tell me, Would not you think your Son's time much

misemployed, in attending to Lectures upon such abstruse Subjects, at so early a time of Life? Would you choose to receive him from the University, armed with the Artillery of a pedantic Theologue; or furnished with that General Kind of Knowledge, which fits him for every Profession, and adorns the Character of a Gentleman?—But I will not offend you, by expatiating upon this Subject. I know your Sentiments: Your heart recoils with Indignation, at the thoughts of having the most important years of your Son's Life frittered away in Studies, which have no Tendency to make him either an useful Member to the Community, or an Ornament to his Family; and which become none but those, who seek for Christianity in the Determinations of Councils, and who think that Religion consists in Speculation. And if you would not have the Youth of the Kingdom occupied in such Labours, you cannot wish to have them compelled to such Subscriptions. Not that I am of the same opinion with those who esteem a Man guilty of a terrible Breach of

C

moral

moral Honesty, who professes an Assent to Articles which he has not studiously examined. I am aware of the Interpretation, which may be put upon this Doctrine: But where no Injury is done to Individuals, where the Heart is not corrupted, nor the Example of pernicious Consequence, where no person is imposed upon, where those before whom the assent is made, and the Legislature for whose benefit it is made, thoroughly understand the Quality and Degree of the Assent which is given, I do not apprehend that any Moral Turpitude can be laid to the charge of Subscribers. Pufendorf observes, “*in juramentis sensum totius orationis valere, prout capere se illum profitetur*” “*is, qui juramentum desert, seu cui juratur.*” And he subjoins the Reason: “*hujus enim præcipuè, non jurantis causâ, juramentum præstatur.*” And it seems to me that this Principle is well-founded; and may be a great Relief, not only to Subscribers to Articles, but to Public Magistrates, Members of Corporations and Universities, and all those who, in conforming to an ancient

Præscript, enter into Engagements, by Oaths or otherwise, which the Change of Times makes it impossible for them to perform, and which in fact no Individual expects them to perform. It were to be wished, that such Obligations were not imposed, whenever the Performance is not expected: But I am not inclined to accuse every one of Perjury or Hypocrisy, as devoid of Integrity and Honour, whose Lot it is to submit to them.

I take my leave with a word or two upon the Subject of my former Address—I neither deplore the Fate of the Petition, nor exult with illiberal triumph at the Decision of your House. My Opinion of the Petitioners, and of their Cause, is not at all changed by the Event of their Application: Success would not have made me commend as wisely calculated, the Means which they judged conducive to their End; nor will want of it make me condemn the Design which they openly and honourably professed. Without pretending to much Knowledge of human Nature, I had from the first a

strong Presentiment of what has happened ; and without being possessed either of Second-sight or much Foresight, I foretell that some Relief will be granted; that The Bishops, to a Man, will think themselves called upon by the Circumstances of the Times, to forward a Reformation, to revise both the Articles and Liturgy of the Church. They will not, it seems, be invited to this Work by the Association at The Feathers ; the Petitioners will not solicit the Interposition of The Bishops. What then ? Must it be supposed, that they will avail themselves of the Prejudice of an Association, or of the Decision of The House of Commons, as an Excuse for not interfering in a Matter more peculiarly belonging to their Care : Must it be believed, that they permitted an injudicious neglect,—put it, a designed Affront,—to warp their judgments, against the Truth ? The Eyes of Laity, and Clergy, of England, and of Europe, are fixed, with impatient Expectation, upon The Bench of Bishops. If there is one Spiritual Lord in the present Parliament, who thinks that no Reformation

formation is wanted, who believes that every thing in our Liturgy and Articles is agreeable to the Word of God, and calculated to promote Christian Edification amongst the thinking part of the Laity assembled in our Churches; Let all thoughts of Innovation be laid aside, even for that One's Sake. Let the Laity still continue to think of Religion with disgust, to speak of it with contempt; let them still mistake for the beautiful and unadorned Figure of genuine Christianity, a motley Monster of Bigotry and Superstition, a Scarecrow of Shreds and Patches, dressed up of old by Philosophers and Popes, to amuse the Speculative and to affright the Ignorant; but which is now become a Butt of Scorn, against which every unfledged Witling of the Age essays his wanton Efforts, and before he has learned his Catechism, is fixed an Infidel for Life. This, I am persuaded, is too frequently the Case; for I have had too frequent Opportunities to observe it. I have ever heard the Scoffs of Unbelievers directed against the Trappings of Religion,

against

20 A SECOND LETTER FROM

against the meretricious Ornaments, by which the Collusion of Priests, and the Infanity of Enthusiasts, have polluted the Chastity and Simplicity of our Faith. Give us for our Belief, Christianity as delivered in the Word of God: Give us for our Spiritual Edification, an Established Church, in which there is nothing to affront the first Suggestions of Common Sense. Expunge from the Ritual of our Worship, the absurd Pretensions of the Church of Rome, and thereby spare the Blushes of every Minister in our Own: let us not be more tenacious of the despondent Doctrines of Calvin, than the Church of Geneva itself.

It is not, Sir, for your Sake, it is not for my own, that I am thus importunate with the Bishops; thinking Men will ever take the Liberty of winnowing the Chaff from the Corn; but it is for the Sake of thousands who cannot think; who cannot, through the Veil of human Ordinances, distinguish the Beauty of Holiness; who, taking some rotten Excrement for the natural

tural Fruit of Christianity, spurn with Abhorrence the Stock upon which it grew. But I mean not to encourage in others, or generate in myself, any Suspicion that the Bishops are either unacquainted with this Evil, or unwilling to remove it; much less would I be thought so presumptuous as to instruct their Lordships. They will pardon me that I am as anxious as themselves for the Honour of The Church of England, of which I am a Member; and as solicitous for the Purity of that Gospel, on the Truth of which I found all my Expectations of another Life. Leaving them, however, to their own Wisdom, to the Opinion which the World justly entertains of their Integrity and Zeal for the Religion of their Master; I conclude, with expressing my Satisfaction at the manner in which the Petition was undoubtedly treated by The Honourable House. Its Merits were deliberately considered, intelligently discussed, impartially determined. Nor could any one expect the contrary: For it cannot be supposed, that the Commons of England, in their collective

tive Legislative Capacity, would either be blind to Truth, afraid of its Consequences, inattentive to the Religion of their Country, or influenced by any worldly Motives in the Decision of a Question essentially respecting the Interest of Christianity. Considered as Individuals, I have the honour to know many, have heard of more, hope there are hundreds in the House, who upon all Occasions think for Themselves, and are never languid in the Cause of Liberty. Religious Liberty, indeed, was the Thing contended for: But he is no Whig in Principle, who does not wish to see it prevail universally. It should not be considered, what *Profession* of Men apply for Relief; but, whether their Request be reasonable, whether it can be granted with Safety to the State.

I have the Honour to be, &c.

A CHRISTIAN WHIG.



Those who are in possession of *The Christian Whig's*
First Letter, are requested to correct the following
Errata:

P. L.

14. '6, *from bottom, read*, Whoever professes to believe
the Canonical Books of the New Testa-
ment, virtually professes to believe, that Jesus
Christ &c.

19. 13. they will ever remain bound

35. 17. producing Paroxysms dangerous

LETTER

NOV 10 1872

My dear Sir,
I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 9th inst.

and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration. I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Yours obedient servant,
J. H. [Name]

[Address]

[Address]

[Address]

[Address]

